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ABSTRACT

As the end of the century nears, it is important to reflect upon the history of early childhood education and what the future holds. Centuries before the Christian era began, Plato wrote that the welfare of children from birth onward was a responsibility of the entire community. In 1628, the first written guidance for out-of-home education of children between the ages of 3 and 7 was provided in a text by Comenius. By the 1890s, kindergartens had gained enough popularity such that a Kindergarten Department became a segment of the National Educational Association. Through the Great Depression and the World Wars, the concept of early childhood education continued to grow. Now as we look toward the next century, we need to: (1) continue to align ourselves with organizations to fight for programs responsive to the needs of children; (2) ensure that teachers have appropriate educational and experiential backgrounds; (3) persuade budget-makers that parental fees must be supplemented by public funding to ensure a quality learning environment; (4) avoid emphasizing any one age level at the expense of others; and (5) remember the basic needs of children. (SW)

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EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION - ITS HISTORIC PAST AND PROMISING FUTURE

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20th Annual Graduation Celebration - May 3, 1995
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As we enter the final five years of this century, the year 2000 can be viewed by early childhood educators as representing an Arch of Triumph after a long and difficult journey. The avenue leading up to this arch begins as some lonely paths meandering along somewhere in the mists of antiquity, in the writings of ancient philosophers who first debated achievements and morality. Almost two and a half centuries before the Christian era began, Plato wrote that from birth onward the welfare of children was a responsibility of the entire commuity - and he felt that since nothing learned under compulsion is well remembered, learning through playful activities was the best way to educate young children. Quintillian, two and a half centuries later, believed that education should begin as soon as a child begins to talk - and when his writings were rediscovered in the fifteenth century they provided a guidepost for our road to follow. His ideas about positive reinforcement and the ineffectiveness of corporal punishment still sound sensible. However, that ancient well-kept roadway deteriorated into a rocky path for hundreds of years, with no particular concern for education at any level. I recently read that Saint Ambrose was fascinated by the idea of someone reading - the concept of looking at marks on the page and knowing what they meant was beyond his understanding. To me, one of the most appalling aspects was that there wasn't even a concept of history!

But the path meandered onwards, through the Dark Ages and the awakening years of the Renaissance, until the first humanist educators once again recognized the need to educate all children and to start at an early age. A major milestone along our route marks the international interest in early childhood education that was inspired by Comenius, a wise Moravian bishop whose 400th birthday was celebrated in 1992. His School of Infancy, originally published in 1628 and still available in our university libraries, included the first published guidance for out-of-home education of children between the ages of three and seven. It emphasized a play curriculum, attractive surroundings, and both men and women teachers who were better trained and better paid than those in schools for older students. Comenius believed that the first six years of life should include two courses of study - the *materials* of thought would be furnished by geography and nature study and the *symbols* would be provided by drawing, beginning writing, and conversation. (I was amused to note that a recent catalog of preschool equipment featured a gingerbread baking pan, like a muffin pan but with forms that shaped the 24 letters

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of the alphabet. The teflon coating was new technology, but the idea of edible letters awarded to young readers was proposed by Comenius and was picked up again in our Colonial dame schools.) His Orbis Pictus was the first picture book for children - adapted in English as the New England primer and used for over a hundred years.

We need to remember that when Comenius was advocating his ideas for early childhood education, concepts like the earth rotating around the sun or of bacteria living in water were enough to cause their proponents to be burned at the stake. When scientific proof of natural phenomena finally gained credibility, Europeans moved to the other extreme and began to believe that everything was orderly and systematic. Another marker along our way would commemorate the change in direction instigated by Rousseau, who proposed that education should be rational and developmental. One of his rules that early childhood educators still follow is that young children should be given actual objects and personal experiences, rather than abstract symbols. Those of us who worry because preschoolers are spending so much time in front of the television and computer screens might be reassured to know that Rousseau had similar concerns about their lack of exploratory environments 'way back in the 1700s.

Ornamenting a vastly improved section of my imaginary highway, I see a replica of the Pestalozzi statue that stands in a Zürich park. Although this Swiss educator worked primarily with orphan children, his writings were so compelling and his methods were so successful that by the 1830s visitors from around the world tried to learn his system of discipline through love and of learning by actual manipulation of objects and discussion about their properties. For example, he wrote that children who learn to count by rote have no understanding of numbers. By providing them with a pan of beans, they could visualize that one bean and one bean are two beans. But that dark alley leading off to the right represents those visitors who thought they were systematizing and improving upon Pestalozzi's ideas by having young children sit quietly seated in galleries, chanting the words as a teacher pointed to the objects according to a scripted program. Wilderspin, who developed these so-called infant schools in England, won great acclaim there and in the United States - even though he "just didn't get it."

Among the true Pestilozzians who actually trusted children to actively learn were founders of America's utopian communities during the 1820s and 30s. Young children were not only nurtured emotionally and physically but there was a conscious effort to educate them in the ways of nature and in self-directed joyful learning. One of the best known was Brook Farm, endorsed by such intellectual luminaries of the time as Ralph Waldo Emerson, where everyone in the community (male and female) was expected to take turns helping Abby Morton keep the youngest children happy under the elms or in the parlor. Pestalozzi was also the

mentor for Robert Owen, who provided on-site care for the young children of his mill workers in Scotland and in the his Utopian community at New Harmony, Indiana. Although the New Harmony community only lasted a couple of years, its teachers maintained a boarding school and teacher training classes that spread the ideas of learning by doing and of teaching with love throughout the United States during the mid-eighteen hundreds. When we recall that at this time most teachers believed that the best route to the brain was through the seat of the children's pants, when a really solicitous teacher used slender willow switches for younger children and clubs for the oldest, it was a tremendous change.

That tower looming high on the horizon is composed of a cube, pillar and ball that honor Friedrich Froebel, the founder of the kindergarten. Like his tombstone, it represents the second "gift" of his sequenced curriculum. The Froebelian kindergarten, after originating in Germany during the 1830s, was introduced to the United States in the mid-1800s and swept this nation by the 1880s. Keep in mind that kindergarten was for children three to about six or seven years old - an age range maintained in the United States until the depression of the 1930s and still in effect many other places in the world. Froebel realized that the elementary school age students attending his German boarding school were unprepared for learning, and he searched for a solution. As an originator of developmental psychology, Froebel based his curriculum upon his education in the physical sciences, the philosophical beliefs of his time, and systematic observations of infants and young children at home and in school. After reading the forgotten works of Comenius and experiencing the Swiss school of Pestalozzi, he introduced methods that stressed individualized learning through play and the creative use of sequenced materials, music and games. He also developed criteria, methodology, and standards for training kindergarten teachers - and he chose the name "kindergarten" to emphasize that children have an innate potential to grow. (Like Pestalozzi, he felt that love was the most important element in the relationship between a teacher and children - in the museum in his childhood home, his Captain Kangaroo-type coat is my favorite exhibit. The pockets have been repeatedly pulled off by children hanging on them and crudely stitched back on again by Froebel himself. For those of us who have been in the field for years, positive and loving relationships with children and their families have been a consistent reinforcement for what we believe in and what we are doing.)

At this point, our road divides. Visualize a boulevard of elementary schoool education zooming straight ahead, with many of those kindergartners who considered themselves to be Froebelians taking their materials and activities into the crowded public school classrooms. They lacked the faith of Froebel in children's innate ability to grow and develop and learn, but did have a faith in the sequenced lessons. Like some of the more recent disciples of

Montessori, they thought that by simply using their old authoritarian discipline and adding standardized commercial equipment they would achieve their goals of superior children and adults. Much that has been written about those early kindergartens was based upon the work of Elizabeth Peabody, who had formerly used the distorted English infant school methods of object teaching. Peabody and others who wanted to fit kindergartens into the rigid public schools played upon the urgent need to Americanize the children of our burgeoning Eurpean immigrant population and upon the desires of a new middle class who wanted their children to get a preparation for their later education.

Those Froebelian kindergartners who believed that children should be empowered to carry out independent and joyous learning were routed off onto an alternate roadway - but it eventually led to the early childhood practices of today. In mid-century, this side street included only kindergartens in German-language schools. During the 1880s, true Froebelian kindergartens in English, first found in small private or philanthropic classes, expanded across the country. Let's pull out onto a rest stop for a few minutes while we note the condition of children a hundred years ago. We tend to play the game of "Ain't it awful" when surveying today's conditions, but in an 1880 article on "Children's Labour" in the Atlantic Monthly, William Hailmann reflected concerns of many Froebelians when he pointed out that American children averaged only five years of school, with some going only a few weeks a year, because parents needed the income from their labor. The solution, he said, was a "Cooperative Commonwealth" which would "establish kindergartens in all nooks and crannies of the country" as the first and most important link in a chain of educational institutions." It was this sort of emphasis that led to adoption of kindergartens by public school systems in the 1890s.

By the 1890s, when kindergartens were gaining such popularity in the public schools that a new Kindergarten Department became an important segment of the National Educational Association (NEA), they finally were recognized. Experimental programs that had evolved from Froebel's system were presented and discussed at these NEA meetings, including the "progressive education" of John Dewey's sub-primary class at the University of Chicago, William Hailmann's kindergartens on Indian reservations, and Felix Adler's concept of non-denominational morality taught in the Ethical Culture Schools.

Patty Smith Hill, the originator of our preschool education of today, was one of those who started her life journey on the by-pass roadway. She considered herself to be a modern follower of Froebel and as late as 1942 asserted that his early studies, "without the help of later psychology and pedagogy," compared favorably with those done in the twentieth century at psychological clinics. She followed a path that led her to a teaching position at Teachers' College, Columbia University. In 1895, she and psychologist J. Stanley Hall had developed

a plan for early education that was considered "far in advance of any realization" but by the the 1920s it became her model for nursery schools. There was a new concern for both physical and mental health and interest in the ideas developed by the MacMillan sisters in England.

Patty Smith Hill recognized the threat of those educators on the main highway, with their emphasis upon habit training and quiet obedience and their efforts to keep families from driving along with them. She shrewdly organized a multi-disciplinary campaign to improve the route of the true Froebelians and she involved mothers in its development through the American Association of University Women (AAUW) and other organizations. Much of what today's students study in early childhood education classes has come directly from coordinated actions taken at that time, for she organized an interdisciplinary Committee on Nursery Schools that had its first annual meeting in 1926. From its inception, this committee was made up of leaders from their respective areas. It included home economists Anna Richardson and Katherine Blunt for their knowledge of nutrition, physical development, and family relations. Psychologists Arnold Gesell and Bird Baldwin, already recognized for their interest in developmental characteristics of young children, were included. Mary Cover Jones, a behavioral psychologist, told me many years later that she was invited as a "token" mother. Several members had a firm background in Froebelian kindergartens, but one represented the Montessorians and another was from the National Council of Primary Education. Committee members and interested institutions soon benefitted from research grants, particularly those given to university nursery schools by the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Foundation. By 1930, there were about three hundred nursery schools in the United States, many of them set up as model programs in college research centers or home economics departments. Others were established on the porch of a family home, in a day nursery for low income working parents, in conjunction with public school kindergarten, as a 24 hour a day "habit clinic" run by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, as a high school home economics laboratory class, and with other affiliations and funding sources. Common factors were an interest in young children's development and a desire to incorporate families into the nursery school programs - and an avoidance of the rigid methods that continued to characterize the public schools.

When the National Committee on Nursery Schools met in 1929, social psychologist Goodwin Watson proposed that organized discussion groups might raise issues that could become the focus of research, rather than having the usual audience listening to speakers. As he anticipated, it was difficult to reach conclusions. While it was agreed that there needed to be a high standard for professional training, for example, there were problems with terminology being used - and with the challenge of recruiting candidates. It was suggested that there should

be a job analysis of nursery school teaching in order to determine what the students were being prepared for. One group recommended that financial support be found for teachers attending professional meetings. Another surveyed its members about children's play equipment and daily scheduling. From these discussion groups, a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of nursery schools was initiated - an approach made even more imperative since the Committee had transacted just one item of business at its annual membership meeting, the decision to become a formal organization called the National Association for Nursery Education - the NANE.

The old saying about even the darkest clouds having silver linings seems applicable at this point. The momentous 1929 crash of the stock market, with the subsequent failure of the financial sub-structure of the United States, could have washed out our road. Instead, the Great Depression caused a bridge to be built that greatly increased traffic. Because millions of adults were unemployed, a vast nursery school system was administered by the federal Office of Education. Its primary goal was to provide jobs for teachers, custodians, medical staff, nutritionists and others. Fortuitously, this program was announced just three days before the 1931 NANE conference in Toronto. At a special Executive Committee meeting on its first afternoon, a committee was appointed to draw up a statement of involvement. It was unanimously approved by the membership that evening. Discussions continued throughout the night and by morning a mimeographed report was ready for distribution. Recognizing the importance of maintaining high standards in all educational work with young children, the special committee recommended that a permanent advisory and supervisory committee be established, in cooperation with other emergency health and educational programs and incorporating the professional organizations sponsoring such programs. To provide staff, a national network of training centers was recommended and it was organized immediately by the membership. In effect, NANE ran the federal program which soon became known as the Works Progress Administration (WPA) Emergency Nursery Schools.

The success of the WPA schools can be seen in their detailed report after the first two years. Although in some schoolrooms the space per child, the amount of sunny window exposure, or provision of such items as pianos or potato mashers were slightly below the standards, the committee expressed a strongly positive evaluation of the overall program. They were particularly impressed by the positive effects upon the parents and upon physical health of the children. There were almost two thousand classes, with 75,000 children, by 1935. Patty Smith Hill, who was constantly involved with them, wrote in 1942 that the federal funds had

been well allocated, guided and supervised. "This was especially true at the outset," she wrote, "when high standards were most important."

After the enthusiasm of the mid-30s, recovery from the Great Depression almost led to the closing of the road leading past the Emergency Nursery Schools. Barricades were being prepared while government funds were withdrawn and the numbers of eligible low income families decreased. Some buildings were sold to private individuals for the reasonable price of one dollar. Equipment was stored or sold and staff members looked for other work. Then, in 1942, as it became obvious that mothers needed to be employed in the war effort, full day child care centers were funded through federal legislation commonly known as the Lanham Act. During the height of the war years, these Lanham Act centers served almost the same number of children as the WPA schools a few years earlier. Many were in former WPA sites and employed the remaining WPA staff.

Once again, still on the bypass roadway but looking over toward the freeway system and wondering where the next on-ramp might be located, volunteers across the country had been asked to coordinate efforts in their communities to help families deal with wartime problems. In doing this, they had inadvertently prepared for wartime child care involvement. Coordinator was Rose Alschuler, a NANE member who chaired a non-governmental agency in Washington called the National Commission for Young Children. She also served as a consultant to the Federal Housing Authority. Her job, as she saw it, was to meet with public and private health, education and welfare people to develop centers and to maintain high standards that would permit a play curriculum.

Except for special showplaces like those at the Kaiser shipyards in Portland, Lanham Act wartime centers were based upon the previous WPA requirements. For example, the five bulletins put out by the National Advisory Committee were still used in the wartime nursery schools. Then, the barricades were again prepared at the conclusion of the war in August 1945. Centers were ordered to close at the end of October, but nine organizations met in Washington to petition a postponement. President Truman acceeded, but only California and a few cities appropriated funds to continue the centers. The emergency had passed and most centers closed or were transferred to other sponsorship.

During the post-war World War II period, the roadway is marked not so much by milestones as by intermittent signposts pointing off in different directions. Parent cooperative nursery schools, while not a new idea, became the somewhat controversial major development of the 1950s. They organized in 1964 as Parent Cooperative Preschools International (PCPI), largely a parent-run organization. Although professional teachers and/or directors were hired, these nursery schools were run by parent members who also staffed the centers. From the

beginning, almost all of them have followed the concept of a play curriculum based on the philosophy of Froebel as transmitted and updated by Patty Smith Hill and others who had travelled the alternate route. A large segment of our early childhood leadership, including university faculty, got introduced to the profession while they were parents in these schools, and in their positions of responsibility they staunchly believe in learning-by-doing. Another signpost points to private proprietary preschools, both half and full day centers, sometimes able to follow a well designed play curriculum, sometimes interested primarily in the profit to be made, sometimes with no particular interest in becoming involved with professional activities - at their worst being what someone once labeled zoo care. Others signposts indicate the way to philanthropic, organizational, and church sponsored programs, many of them rather informally administered and some reflecting the policies of their sponsor rather than any educational philosophy. One shows the resurgence of Montessori schools, which had a long-forgotten Froebelian base.

As we pause to contemplate the traffic congestion of the period, we can take time to look around at what is happening. In publications like the 1947 Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, we can see how an awareness of wartime horrors and uncertainties about a future world with atomic bombs affected education. Only through sharing and democratic decision making could nations exist, and these concepts must be learned as soon as possible. At the same time, there was a new competition with our former allies. To signify the Cold War, a commemorative marker along our roadway is dedicated to the 1957 launching of Sputnik by the Soviet Union. Previous to this time, little attention had been given to formally teaching academic subjects in kindergarten, much less at the preschool level. Before first grade, it was assumed, children should be involved in traditional experiential activities such as blocks, painting, dramatic play and nature study. After Sputnik, accountability for academic gains was built into more and more early childhood classes and the early grades of elementary school, with higher scores on standardized tests used to show improvement. Early childhood education once again moved into the research spotlight as efforts to improve cognitive growth were explored. At the same time, there was interest in research on creativity and what American education needed to provide in order to compete with the Soviet Union. Writers were saying things like "It is probably best to think of creativity as a continual process for which the best preparation is creativity itself. There is real joy in discovery which not only is its own reward but provides the urge for continuing exploration and discovery." Froebel himself couldn't have expressed it better.

Early childhood educators, still seeking recognition that would allow them up on the boulevard, were becoming more cohesive. Membership in National Association for Nursery

Education had gradually grown from the hundred or so who had paid their dues during wartime. The increased size was not just in total numbers but through clusters of local and state organizations that were potential affiliates of a strong central organization. At the 1962 NANE conference, just two years before she became its first full-time executive director, Cornelia Goldsmith urged members to re-assess their roles and re-evaluate their goals, recognizing that they lived in a period of rapid social change. She reviewed the progress made in New York City during the previous twenty years, and challenged the members to "develop ways of working together; as they overcome their suspicions, jealousies and prejudices the greatest giant step of all will have been achieved." She concluded by saying that "I believe we have what it will take.". Efforts to increase the membership were successful, for there were about six thousand by the mid-1960s - far from our current membership of a hundred thousand, but already a significant force for early childhood education.

At this point, it becomes difficult to trace a single path, for NANE was already in the process of its reorganization to become today's National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Although its members were primarily involved with teacher training or provision of preschool education, the impact of other disciplines was making itself felt. Michael Harrington had just dramatically pointed out the problems of children living in poverty. Benjamin Bloom used data from a thousand longitudinal studies to make a strong case for early childhood education. Martin Deutsch was working with economically disadvantaged preschool children in New York and Susan Gray was doing similar research in Tennessee. Piaget's translated writings met with welcome acceptance. He had grown up in Switzerland, where Pestalozzian and Froebelian concepts had been dominant, so many of us welcomed this psychological research that supported what we had been doing for years. Even public interest in President Kennedy's children and their co-op nursery school in the White House added impetus to the preschool movement. The mid-sixties was a period of great ferment in education.

Still using the analogy of a highway, we might say that the directional signs had been removed and we were faced with a meshing of different streets which led in unknown directions. There was a flurry of activity within the Office of Economic Opportunity during late spring of 1965, when disadvantaged young children were recognized by the War on Poverty. As a result, a broad street named Head Start lies off to the side, well paved with good intentions even though maintenance funds have sometimes been inadequate. One unanticipated result of of Head Start was the recognition by middle class parents that their children also needed to attend a preschool. A second result was that educational research reached down to

the preschool level, since it was necessary to prove that funds expended upon Head Start were well invested. These studies have helped determine the direction of all children's programs, since Head Start money for research and for dissemination has been available for more than a quarter of a century.

But now we notice another road, well constructed but then barricaded and abandoned It represents efforts throughout the 1970s of thirty-eight professional organizations and thousands of concerned professionals to develop Federal Interagency Day Care Requirements (FIDCR). Through compromises and negotiations, they were accepted by everyone concerned. The Department of Health and Human Services intended to enact them into law by December 31, 1979, but they were "withdrawn for further study" just before the inauguration of Ronald Reagan as president. By August, 1980, the budget reconciliation process included a one year delay in their implementation. Eventually, nothing of consequence happened.

What happens when our route is blocked? As people driving north on California's Highway 5 found out after our recent floods, if we really want to get to our destination we just take a detour - and may even find that the scenery is more interesting, the benefits even greater. In 1983, a major goal of the NAEYC was the Center Accreditation Project (CAP), "to stimulate improvement of and give recognition to good quality programs for young children in the United States, - not just to recogize high quality programs, but to improve the quality of care and education provided for all young children." Its success can be noted by flipping through the yellow pages of any phone book in the country to count how many centers flaunt that distinctive flaming torch to indicate that they have gained accreditation status.

Although there are still potholes and bumpy spots, the view ahead seems clear. One guidebook is the NAEYC accreditation procedure through which early childhood programs, whether privately owned or cooperative or Head Start or in the public schools, undergo a self-evaluation process to indicate whether they meet the high standards. If you were to compare these accreditation guidelines to the writings of Froebel, you would find great similarities after almost two centuries of travel on the highways and byways. But as we stand here, enjoying the view ahead, we should keep in mind the caution on page one of Minimum Essentials, the 1930 guidelines from the Committee of Nursery Schools, that "It is undesirable . . . that details and practices should become crystalized or even that objectives and standards should be fixed." Today's graduates in early childhood education need to be part of that fix-it team, and can make changes we don't even anticipate today.

Rather like a citizen's committee to improve local streets, the NAEYC Public Policy Network for Children has been established with the intention of establishing and reaching both short and long term issue-related goals, and dealing with the problems of salaries and program

quality. Other organizations have also been concerned with compensation issues, with the most dramatic activities centering around the Worthy Wage Campaign. Unless we look back down the road to our past, we may think that financial concerns are new. It is common knowledge that today's salaries for teachers are not commensurate with their responsibilities, but the difference lies in current efforts to improve them. One of my favorite complaints from a century ago, from Elizabeth Peabody's Lectures in the Training Schools, expresses the old attitude this way:

> The first non-German kindergartens were regarded as more or less of a luxury for the children of well-to-do people who could afford to pay forty to a hundred dollars a year for their children to play. These were the families of the "rich and cultivated people" who allowed dress styles to make their laundry bills higher than their school bills, but whose low opinion of kindergarten teachers was reflected in such minimal salaries that interested women were warned that they must be "above mere pecuniary motive" as they worked with God "on the paradisical ground of childhood."

Now, in 1995, our professional status as early childhood educators has been built through close cooperation with other organizations that share our concern. One indication of changed attitudes has been indicated by the home economists. I was NAEYC representative to their 1993 conference on "Positioning the Profession for the Twenty-First Century" and participated in the decision to change the name of the profession from Home Economics to Family and Consumer Sciences. Others also recognize the importance of families and early childhood programs; gaining access to the boulevard has been attained through liaison activities. Progress represents hundreds of individual lifetimes, countless meetings, and the culmination of a long long journey.

Are we going to enter the next century with a changed attitude toward children? We hear so much about those who have inadequate diets, who lack medical care, or who are mentally and physically abused - but when historians compare the lives of children today to those of any past centuries, we find that there has indeed been great improvement. Our trip down this historic road has been so fast that we haven't had much time to look at the scenery alongside. I believe that we are aware of current problems because our standards are high and there IS concern for all children. When issues are not talked about, it doesn't mean that they don't exist. It means that not enough people CARE for there to be a discussion. Only when enough concern is shown on both sides of an issue will it become worked through. There are many examples, with one of them being a recognition that the power of children's advocates was enough to defeat the balanced budget amendment so highly desired by Newt Gingrich and others in Congress. The recent tragedy in Oklahoma City is another indication, with some

evidence indicating that the bombing site was chosen specifically because killing young children would make it more newsworthy. If an airplane had smashed into a mountain to cause that many adult fatalities, it would have been given only brief attention. Response from across the nation, to this and other problems, shows that the American people DO care about children.

But this is the end of our journey. Like any tourists, we can look back and ask what was learned in our travels. Here are a few suggestions:

1. If we believe in appropriate education for young children, we must continue to align ourselves with other organizations to fight for programs responsive to the needs of those enrolled, with age-appropriate environments and materials. We must never again depend upon the magic of manufactured equipment and prescribed rote teaching. (This, of course, is true for learning at all age levels.)
2. We need to make sure that teachers have specific educational and experiential backgrounds so that they understand and respect and relate to young children. Mere textbooks and passing scores on examinations are important, but are not enough.
3. We must persuade budget-makers that group size is crucial to learning through play. Recent research has verified Froebel's original kindergarten ratio of one teacher, one or two assistants/volunteers, and about fifteen children. To attain this ratio and to ensure other high quality factors, parental fees must be supplemented by some sort of public funding.
4. Just as we want others to see the preschool years as an important developmental period, neither can we emphasize any one age level at the expense of others. Like Froebel, we must visualize a lifespan continuum in which each period should be valued for itself and with all members of each level valuing one another. We need to recognize that a significant group joining us on our road through the arch is composed of organized senior citizens who also value an intergenerational approach to issues.
5. Because of time constraints, it is impossible to discuss the implications of differences of opinion about the education of young children today. However, I believe that the greatest lesson we can learn from the past is that the early childhood philosophy established through the centuries has provided a solid core of beliefs despite the various labels that are attached to early childhood programs There is basic agreement about what is needed. We **must** stick together on major issues, with more agreements and fewer disagreements.

The educational systems that were developed back in the days of Pony Express communications will change. As early childhood educators, we believe that true learning does not consist of an authority transmitting knowledge, much of it empty and useless to the passive students. We believe "in our hearts" that a teacher must also be a facilitator of self-directed learning, a facilitator who stimulates thinking by enabling students to see relationships among phenomena, test relationships, and develop insight. We also know that a great deal of research confirms this belief. Although our philosophy is based upon Froebel's ideas about the kindergarten, his vision was broader than that, for he also said almost two hundred years ago that learning should be a lifelong process. We now have highly efficient and electronic media which makes it possible for learners to readily access knowledge sources. The next few years will be full of intellectual turmoil as we see a restructuring of education so that it encompasses the entire lifespan. Learning will not stop now with graduation. You will be able to use interactive television, computer-assisted learning, and all of the miraculous developments of this revolutionary period that has just begun. You will be able to access your colleagues to share concerns and achievements. Those of you who are going out into the world of education now will have the opportunity to be both learners and teachers in the most exciting period since the Rennaisance.

The caution is that we need to remember those basic needs of children, which Alice Honig stated so well when she said that "The creative genius of a teacher is in the ability to find ways to interact with each child according to that child's needs, to stretch an attention span, motivate a child to persist at a task, or provide opportunity to experiment with materials, actively and autonomously."

You truly DO face a glorious future. May you go through the Arch of Triumph with joy and confidence as you progress down that boulevard, proud of our historic past as you move on into the promising future. There's a great century coming up!

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